



The LongPath

A North Alabama DX Club Publication

Special points of interest:

- From the President
- July Program
- Summer DX Challenge
- Recent Meeting Minutes
- DX Contests

When Tom sent a reminder a few days ago asking for this column I realized I'd be on vacation for the July meeting so coordinated with Warren to conduct the meeting at our alternate venue – Ryan's Steakhouse & Buffet. We're unsure of the level of quiet & privacy at this location (a partition that used to separate the long room from another group is gone) so we have not scheduled a program. We'll see how it works out and we have another option for August which Warren will discuss at the meeting.

Don't know about you but DX seems to have taken a back-burner in my shack this summer. What time I've had for radio has been split chasing W1AW's and the weekend of Field Day operation.

A fun & educational experience for sure this FD. Friday afternoon found me scratching my head over why the 40m 2 element wire beam wouldn't tune. I'd modeled it in EZNEC and purposely built the antenna long and intending to tune the driven element in the field, then measure & set the reflector 6% longer than the DE. All the while keeping in mind that adding the reflector would shift the resonance down 100 to 150 KHz. I was making measurements through 92' of coax which is almost exactly 1 wavelength on 40m.

July Program

Because we're trying out Ryan's after several years at other locations, no program has been scheduled. We will discuss Field Day, W100AW/4 for Hamfest, and whatever else comes up. See you there at 6:00 for dinner, 7:00 for the business meeting, and 7:30 for this discussion.

From the President

By Mark Brown, N4BCD

I was cutting off equal amounts from each end but measurements were all over the place and not repeatable until finally I tried a different piece of coax. Suddenly things measured correct but by now the DE was too short. Split bolt connectors made for a good field splice.

The coax was RG-9BU (double braided SILVER plated copper shield) from a silent key. Alpha Wire hasn't made this stuff in decades. The week before, I'd swept the cable for loss and it measured fine. Someday I'll bring this to work for a look-see on precision instruments. The rest of the weekend was a blur of on/off activity on 40 & 15m with some good rates and Elmering new operators.

In the middle of one Saturday afternoon shift with my back to the trailer door I smelled perfume, then noticed an attractive lady sitting on the bench beside me with a big camera. She filmed for a few minutes before departing and we never spoke. The part that airs on WHNT-48 has me saying "Thank's for the Hoosier state, QRZ'd K4BFT". I didn't dream it, there's video to prove it.

One more thing. Hamfest DX Banquet tickets sales via PayPal are doing well. Be sure to purchase your tickets before they're GONE.

73, Mark N4BCD



How to Join

- * Come to a club meeting;
- * or send in an application by mail (form on www.NADXC.org)
- * or call Tom Duncan at (256)705-2147

Summer DX Challenge

By Steve Werner, AG4W

Each summer I find it nice to reflect on the things that worked last DX and contest season and the things that need improvement to take you to the next level. With the DX and contest season running from the end of September CQWW RTTY contest to CQWPX phone at the end of March it leaves you plenty of time to get ready for the next season given some planning. Things to consider are antennas, station equipment and station layout. This is also a great time to catch up on QSL and award submissions.

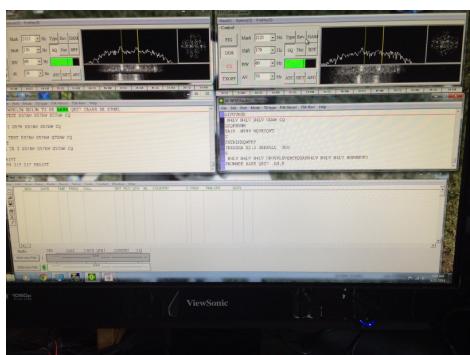
Each summer given a fixed budget most antenna improvements yield the best performance improvement the next season. These may not be the easy things to implement. That is why many stations are out of balance for maximum performance given a fixed total investment. A competition grade radio should be matched to a competition grade antenna if at all possible. Small city lots may not make this possible. The first thing I would consider is getting capability on all of the bands from 6-160 meters including the WARC bands. A tuner can help in the beginning to get WARC band capability from your other antennas. This summer I plan to get 2 more directions from my existing low band beverages. Having those for the NE and NW made a big difference last season. Next season I hope to have better ears to the SW and SE. There are several approaches to accomplish this and I purchased the material at Dayton to get started on the first one.

I am always in awe of what Rick at NQ4I plans to do in the off season. It always has a healthy dose of antenna maintenance and new antennas. Adding 100+ foot towers, huge yagis, or new receiving antennas are large commitments of time and money every year to take the station to the next level. It is exciting to try out the new capability the

next season.

On the station side of things I have installed an InRad 2.1KHz roofing filter instead of the stock 3KHz filter in my FTDX-5000. I had the narrow filters in the Orion and liked them. I also updated the rig firmware. That added an improved CW peaking filter. I never update rig firmware during contest season due to the risk of bricking the rig. That would involve a trip back to the factory and missing 3-6 weeks of activity. The FTDX-5000 has 4 sets of firmware.

I also intend to add dual RTTY copy for this coming season. Most of the top RTTY contesters and DXers have that capability. Some of the best RTTY contesters now run multiple algorithms for each channel in parallel and use the best one given the current conditions.



Don't ignore station layout and ergonomics. A good part of successful contesting and DXing is your ability to spend time in the seat. If you can only spend 10 hours operating in a contest this needs to be looked at carefully. It can be due to a poor seat, poor lighting, poor computer screen, poor headset or poor temperature control. I have won contests in the 4th call area against other stations that had far better performance only because I was able to put in more seat time. This year I have gone back to a lighter headset. The heavy headsets feel like they are crushing my head after a 40+ out of 48 hour contest. I used the Heil Pro-Set before and



will use the Pro-Micro now for phone contests. I use the Bose earbuds for CW and RTTY. I will still use the Pro Set at NQ4I since it blocks out more of the noise around you.

I recently turned in my QSLs to be checked at Dayton and updated Logbook of the World for DXCC. Last contest and DX season was great and it showed with the backlog of QSL and award activity. You should try to get QSLs in order to be checked at the Huntsville Hamfest.

There are some good summer operating activities. The E skip on 6 meters peaks in June/July and gives you the opportunity to add 6 meter countries. This requires a lot of listening and sometimes very short openings. This year we also have the W1AW portable operations. There will also be W100AW/4 at the Hamfest. And don't forget Field Day.

Don't forget to set some goals for next season. They can be as simple as try your first RTTY contest. It can be a new award. By the way, K1BV is now providing his award directory free on the internet. I use to subscribe to the paper

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Summer DX Challenge

(cont'd from p. 2)

version of this. It includes 3,300 different awards from 110 DXCC countries. Even the folks that think they have worked them all can find some great challenges in some of these awards. I expect few could qualify for the Worked All Kazakhstan Award or the All Turkish Cities Award. Some of the awards include some amazing plaques and trophies. It can be found at <http://www.dxawards.com/DXAwardDir/APL1005.htm>.

Enjoy the summer but use some of it to prepare for the next exciting season.

73,

Steve AG4W

May Meeting Minutes

By Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK

Date: May 13, 2014

NA DX Club Meeting Minutes

1. Mark Brown welcomed all members and their guest – we had 20 in attendance with 2 guests

2. The W100AW/4 activation during the Huntsville Ham Fest was discussed

a. The site will be the former Holiday Inn location parking area

b. 2 stations will be available

c. The HARC crank-up tower will be used for one station

d. A second dipole setup will be used for the second station

e. One radio will be a Kenwood TS-990

f. Second radio will most likely be a Flex Radio

g. We have access to a MA5B or a TA-33 beam

h. The other antenna will be a set of wire dipoles

May Meeting Minutes

(cont'd)

3. Michael Werner announced web site upgrades are underway

4. A second note was sent by our Secretary/Treasurer to Rick Ruhl President of Ham Radio Deluxe LLC with thanks for renewing our NADXC.ORG domain thru Jan 2016 and requesting assistance with getting the domain under our management.

5. Bob De Pierre K8KI presented a program on transmission lines and the relationship to a Smith Chart. It was a very informational program.

6. Current announced Bank Balance.

Beginning Balance \$ 3,439.65

Deposits 0.00

Withdrawals 0.00

Ending Balance \$3,439.65

Notes provided by:

William Bathgate KD8IGK – NADXC Treasurer and Secretary

June Meeting Minutes

By Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK

Date: June 10, 2014

NA DX Club Meeting Minutes

1. Mark Brown N4BCD welcomed all members and their guest – we had 17 in attendance with 2 guests.

2. Bill Bathgate KD8IGK announced that the NADXC Banquet during the Huntsville Ham Fest information is now posted on the NADXC web site and on the Club Station Call W4QB QRZ page.

3. The boards of directors met on June 17 to approve the transfer of the club call trustee from Bill Hull to Bill Bathgate and we submitted this to the FCC. This license was granted and will be kept in Bill's possession. A copy of

June Meeting Minutes

(cont'd)

these meeting minutes and the FCC license has been provided for the records.

4. We had one new member this month, Rob Suggs KB5EZ, Welcome to the club Rob.

5. Tom Duncan discussed the W100AW/4 activation during the Huntsville Ham Fest d

a. We have access to a MA5B or a TA-33 beam

b. The other antenna will be a set of wire dipoles

c. We will not have two campers, but are seeking options on this such as a tent or a loaner camper from another member

6. Mark, N4BCD presented a program on lighting protection substituting for our planned program on effective station grounding by Jerry K4SAV who was ill and could not attend.

7. It was announced that the meeting on July 8th will be at Ryan's Steak house, 1818 University Drive, Huntsville, AL.

8. Current announced Bank Balance.

Beginning Balance \$ 3,439.65

Deposits 40.00

Withdrawals 0.00

Ending Balance \$3,479.65

Notes provided by:

William Bathgate KD8IGK – NADXC Treasurer and Secretary



June 17 Directors Meeting

By Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK

Attendees:

Mark Brown, N4BCD—President

Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK—Sec'y/Treasurer

Chuck Lewis, N4NM—Director

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY—Director

Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI—Director

Agenda:

Nominate the change in W4QB Trustee

1st nomination by Tom Duncan nomi-

nates Bill Bathgate take over as trustee for W4QB. Seconded by Chuck Lewis.

Chuck moved the nomination be accepted by acclamation, this seconded by Tom Duncan. With no dissenting votes, Bill was nominated as trustee.

W100AW/4 Planning

Tim WIninger AB4B is recruiting operators.

Regarding antennas, it was recommended by Mark and Johnny Winter,

KR4F (outside this meeting) to use wire dipoles.

Operators John Hilliard K4JCH and Jamie Lucas, N4OEY have been requested to run W100AW/4 from 6 pm to 10 pm Saturday, August 16th.

The web site has been restored and the NADXC.ORG domain name transferred to control of Bill Bathgate.

Minutes reviewed and approved by Bill Bathgate and Mark Brown.

DX Contests for July

By Chuck Lewis, N4NM

DL DX RTTY Contest (Digital), 80 - 10M

July 5, 1100Z to July 6, 1059Z

Exchange: RST & Serial No.

See page 79, July QST and
www.drcg.de

IARU HF World Championships (SSB/ CW), 160 - 10M

July 12, 1200Z to July 13, 1200Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus ITU zone; IARU HQ stns send HQ abbrev.

See page 79, July QST and [http://
www.arrl.org/contests](http://www.arrl.org/contests)

DARC 10 Meter Digital Corona (Digital), 10M

July 6, 1100Z to 1700Z

Exchange: RST plus S.N.

See page 79, July QST and
www.darc.de/referate/ukw-funksport

DMC RTTY Contest (RTTY), 80 - 10M

July 19, 1200Z to July 20, 1200Z

Exchange: RST plus S.N.

See page 79, July QST and
www.digital-modes-club.org

RSGB IOTA Contest (CW/SSB), 80 - 10M

July 26, 1200Z, to July 27, 1200Z

Exchange: RS(T), S. N., & IOTA# if
island

See page 79, July QST and
www.rsgbcc.org

WAE DX Contest, (CW), 80 - 10M

August 9, 0000Z, to Aug. 10, 2359Z

Exchange: RS(T) plus Serial #

See: <http://www.darc.de/referate>

OTHERS:

Venezuelan Independence Day Contest

0000Z July 5 to 2400Z July 6

Run for the Bacon Contest,

0100Z-0300Z, July 21

Dates & times often change or are misprinted in the journals. Beware.

Chuck, N4NM

The LongPath Staff

Publisher/Editor:

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Departments:

Chuck Lewis, N4NM, DX Contests

Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK, Minutes

Mark Brown, N4BCD, From the President

NADXC Officers and Directors

President **Mark Brown, N4BCD**

Vice President **Warren Alford, KJ4RAQ**

Secretary/Treasurer **Bill Bathgate, KD8IGK**

At-large directors **Chuck Lewis, N4NM**

Tom Duncan, KG4CUY

Kevin Hibbs, KG4TEI